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RESOLUTION ADOPTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

[on the report of the Second Committee (A/45/856)]

45/221. Strengthening of the Office of the United Nations Disaster Relief Co-ordinator

The General Assembly,

Deeply concerned about the increasing vulnerability of countries, in particular developing countries, to natural and other sudden disasters,

Aware of the profound negative impact of such disasters on the economic and social growth of developing countries,

Recognizing the imperative need to ensure a reduction of damage caused by disasters, through the timely adoption of appropriate preventive measures and by means of rapid and effective response when disasters occur,

Reaffirming that the Office of the United Nations Disaster Relief Co-ordinator is the focal point within the United Nations system for matters related to disaster relief and disaster mitigation,

Having noted the constraints and difficulties currently facing the Office of the United Nations Disaster Relief Co-ordinator in the discharge of its mandate, as set out in paragraph 1 of General Assembly resolution 2816 (XXVI) of 14 December 1971,

1. Endorses Economic and Social Council resolution 1990/63 of 26 July 1990 concerning the Office of the United Nations Disaster Relief Co-ordinator;

2. Requests the Secretary-General, in this connection, taking into account, inter alia, the experience gained by the Office of the United Nations Disaster

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Relief Co-ordinator in the situation between Iraq and Kuwait, to make proposals to the Economic and Social Council at its second regular session of 1991 for the strengthening of the capacity of the Office to fulfil its mandate, which are to be included in the proposed programme budget for the biennium 1992-1993 in the light of an overall analysis of the capacity of the United Nations system to respond to calls for disaster mitigation and emergency relief assistance and of the role played by the Office in this field which should address, inter alia, the implementation of General Assembly decision 42/433 of 11 December 1987 and the strengthening of arrangements for the response to complex emergencies;

3. Also requests the Secretary-General to consider, within the framework of the overall analysis described in paragraph 2 above, the need to adapt further, in the case of the Office of the United Nations Disaster Relief Co-ordinator, existing United Nations procedures concerning the procurement, transport and storage of emergency supplies, including the establishment of special warehouses as needed, in order to permit the Office to respond in a timely manner to the special and immediate requirements of countries exposed to sudden disasters;

4. Recognizes the importance for the Office of the United Nations Disaster Relief Co-ordinator to be in a position immediately to provide small emergency grants to countries stricken by disasters to meet their most immediate needs;

5. Notes, in that respect, the pressure on existing budgetary provisions for present and future needs during the biennium 1990-1991;

6. Requests the Economic and Social Council to review the situation at its second regular session of 1991 and authorizes the Office of the United Nations Disaster Relief Co-ordinator, pending that review, to continue to make grants available to disaster-stricken countries, not to exceed $50,000 per disaster, out of the existing reserve of $360,000 allocated for that purpose in the programme budget of the Office for the biennium 1990-1991;

7. Calls upon Governments and private and voluntary organizations to make generous cash contributions to the existing contingency relief fund of the Office of the United Nations Disaster Relief Co-ordinator so as to provide it with the flexibility necessary to address specific needs created by sudden disaster situations;

8. Requests the Secretary-General to include information on the implementation of the present resolution in his next biennial report on the Office of the United Nations Disaster Relief Co-ordinator, which will be submitted to the General Assembly on an exceptional basis at its forty-sixth session, through the Economic and Social Council at its second regular session of 1991.

71st plenary meeting
21 December 1990